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# KRC TIMES

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### PERSPECTIVE

Drink water this morning. Do that for your kidneys. 2. Eat at least an egg today. Do that for your brain. 3. Use your legs. Exercise. Take a walk. Do that for your heart. 4. Stay hydrated through today. Do that for your body. 5. Get morning sunlight. Do that for your skin. 6. When you sit, sit straight. When you stand, stand straight. Do that for your spine.

## Nirmala Sitharaman boosts Nagaland capital investment

**KOHIMA**  
Nagaland's capital investment efforts received a boost on November 15 as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman virtually inaugurated two projects under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI): a multipurpose hall in Phek and a guest house for administrative officers in Zunheboto. The announcement came during her visit to Chumoukedima, where she also held a review meeting with Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, Deputy Chief Ministers TR Zeliang and Y Patton, and senior state officials. The meeting focused on the progress of SASCI projects, which the Centre considers crucial for accelerating infrastructure development in smaller and underserved regions. Sitharaman said her visit centered on assessing development indicators in Kiphire, an Aspirational District, reviewing progress in health, education, nutrition, agriculture, and women's empowerment. She noted the Centre's strong focus on the Northeast, highlighting that Union Ministers have collectively visited the region over 700 times, and the Prime Minister has made more than 70 trips, reflecting sustained government priority for regional development. Addressing concerns about road conditions, she said the National Highways Authority of India now enforces stricter quality monitoring and can blacklist contractors who fail to meet standards.

### WHO SAID WHAT

On 10th December, Assam will witness a historic moment as we unveil the State's first official, grand Swahid Smarak in Guwahati. I urge every household to light a lamp that evening in honour of the brave martyrs of the Assam Movement. Let the timeless anthem "Swahid Pranam Tumak" resonate across our State, reminding us of their sacrifice and inspiring us to build the Assam they dreamed of.

- Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam

## Manipur urges Centre to curb soaring airfares, seeks additional flights to Imphal

NEW DELHI/IMPHAL:

The Manipur government has once again urged the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to intervene and reduce the steep airfares on routes connected to Imphal and to introduce additional flights to and from Imphal airport, officials said on Saturday. Chief Secretary (Transport, Textiles, Commerce and Industry), Anurag Bajpai, held a crucial meeting with the Secretary, MoCA and explained in detail about the civil aviation challenges being faced by the people of Manipur. The concerned Joint Secretary and Director of the Ministry attended the meeting. Bajpai raised the prime issue of exorbitant airfare being charged by various Airlines, including IndiGo, Air India Express and Alliance Air, operating in the Imphal sector, causing extreme hardship to the people. It was conveyed that almost 5 to 6 times, airfare was being charged by them compared to the other seven states of the Northeast region (NER). The Additional Chief Secretary told the MoCA secretary that the guidelines



of the Government of India for capping of airfare are not being followed by the airline authorities in the Imphal sector. It was also informed that the number of aircraft has also been reduced by all the operational airlines from October in the Imphal sector. Bajpai highlighted during the meeting that Alliance Air has stopped services in certain extremely essential sectors - Imphal-Silchar-Imphal; Imphal-Aizawl-Imphal; and Imphal-Dibrugarh-Imphal. Keeping in view the huge public demand, he urged the Secretary, MoCA, to advise Alliance Air to revive them immediately. It was also requested to consider them for coverage under RCS-UDAN (Regional Connectivity Scheme-UdeDeshkaAam-Naagrik (RCS-UDAN) as earlier. The Additional Chief Secretary raised the point

of an urgent need to start international service from Imphal to Bangkok (both Passenger and Cargo) at least once or twice a week to start with, as it is in high demand from Industry associations and the general public to promote exports. He also suggested that, keeping in view the available slots, Akasa Air and Druk Air may also be considered to start their services in the Imphal sector. In order to meet the huge inter-district demand for air services, the senior Manipur government official requested the MoCA to advise helicopter companies to increase the number of copters. At present, both companies - Pawan Hans and GVHL - are operating only one copter. Further, it was also conveyed that Pawan Hans charges more than GVHL for the same sortie for passengers, which is against the agreement with MoCA under RCS-UDAAN. Bajpai also invited the attention of the Secretary, MoCA, to the expeditious consideration of the long-pending request of the Manipur Government for renaming Imphal International Airport as Bir Tikendrajit International Airport.

## PM Modi flags off major tribal school project in Manipur's Kangpokpi

IMPHAL

A major expansion of tribal education infrastructure in Manipur moved forward on November 15 as Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated a new Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) for Songpekjang village in Kangpokpi district. The project adds a 480-seat modern residential school to Sadar Hills West, a district long in need of improved facilities for tribal students. The initiative forms part of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs' nationwide EMRS programme, which aims to provide free, high-quality residential education to tribal children. While the Prime Minister led the national-level virtual ceremony, the foundation stone at the Songpekjang site was unveiled simultaneously by Kangpokpi Deputy Commissioner Mahesh Chaudhari during a public event attended by villagers, local leaders, school principals, students and government officials. Senior figures—including the Governor of Manipur Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Union Culture

and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, Union MoS Durgadas Uikey and Outer Manipur MP Alfred K Arthur—joined the virtual programme. The district-level event featured a live webcast of Modi's address, followed by the unveiling of the foundation plaque, a speech by the Deputy Commissioner and a vote of thanks from Samuel Misao, MCS. Chaudhari called the development a milestone for the district, noting that Modi had recently laid the foundation for another EMRS from Gujarat. He said the new school at Songpekjang was expected to become a "game changer" for the region and urged educational institutions in Kangpokpi to strive for higher academic standards. Officials said the new EMRS brings the district closer to bridging long-standing educational gaps, supporting the government's broader effort to strengthen tribal communities through access to modern, holistic learning environments.

## Japan Arena Makes a Vibrant Comeback at Shillong's Cherry Blossom Festival



SHILLONG

The Japan Arena opened on November 14 at Ward's Lake as one of the major attractions of the Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival 2025, marking its second straight year as a centrepiece of the celebration. The showcase builds on the growing cultural ties between Japan and Meghalaya, where Sakura traditions find an autumn-season parallel. The arena will run till today. The space has been crafted as a full Japanese cultural immersion. Visitors stepped into the calm world of Sumi-e, watching traditional ink painting unfold on Washi paper, alongside Shodo calligraphy displays and interactive

Origami sessions that remained busy throughout the day. The Japan Foundation added a pop-culture spin with an immersive "Learn Japanese with Anime" workshop, helping festival-goers pick up language basics through familiar animated characters. Cosplay Theatre Plays by Team Blood Eagle and CLOUD? Duo brought a burst of colour and performance energy as they portrayed beloved characters onstage. A major highlight of Day 1 was the culinary section led by Chef Santosh, a certified Japanese cuisine specialist from Bengaluru's Suku restaurant. From 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM, he served authentic Japanese dishes that quickly became a crowd favourite. The musical spotlight featured Tura-born singer-songwriter Amo Daring, whose set of "healing music" blended warm vocals with indie pop/rock influences. Drawing inspiration from artists such as One Ok Rock, Lana Del Rey and Paramore, her performance offered a serene yet powerful close to the cultural segment before the CM-MGMP artists took over for the evening. The lineup for the arena also included energetic J-Pop dance numbers and conversations on "Building Creative Economy" and "The Art of Visual Storytelling," adding depth to the day's programming. Set against the blooming landscape of the festival, the Japan Arena opened Day 1 as a lively cultural bridge—offering visitors a blend of tradition, creativity and modern Japanese culture as the Cherry Blossom celebrations got underway.

## CM Sarma flags drone-aided drug delivery; education dept boosts anti-drug drive

GUWAHATI

Assam and other northeastern states have witnessed a huge spike in narcotic cases in the last few years, with peddlers resorting to many modern tactics. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that with modified tactics, the drugs are being delivered by traffickers sitting in far-off places, which is very dangerous. "In Assam and Meghalaya, primarily drug carriers have been operating, and it is a long battle for us against them, and it will continue. However, the traffickers have been using various methods to deliver the consignments, and often they have been using drones as carriers of narcotics items," he stated recently. According to the CM, the menace of the drug is huge, and this must be dealt with by spreading awareness among school and college students who can easily come under the influence of narcotics. The Education Department in Assam has been giving priority to anti-drug awareness campaigns. In Golaghat district, Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator (CRCC), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan told the media, "This year's Children's Day celebration was marked with a powerful learning experience to spread awareness campaign." Also Read - Retired teachers protest in Guwahati,



ti, urge CM to resolve pension, gratuity issues in Nahorbari M V School in the Golaghat district, more than 250 students and teachers engaged in an anti-drug awareness session. Kakoty said, "The session was aimed to educate students about the harmful effects of substance use and empower them to make informed, healthy choices. The Children's Day programme featured poster-making activities, interactive games, and open discussions to help students understand the far-reaching consequences of drug abuse on individuals, families and communities." "Children's Day is a reminder that every child de-

serves a safe and healthy future. Awareness of drug abuse will help them make wise choices and say no to habits that can harm their lives," Kakoty added. Students participated enthusiastically, using art and creativity to express their commitment to staying drug-free. "I understood that saying no to drugs means saying yes to my dreams and my family," shared Rahul Gogoi, a class V student. A senior official of the Education Department said that on special occasions in schools, it was instructed to organise anti-narcotics campaigns to educate students against the harmful effects of drug consumption.

## In Silchar Skies, Precision Meets Empowerment as IAF Airshow Celebrates Women in Uniform

SILCHAR

The midday skies over Silchar transformed into a theatre of colour, precision and inspiration on Saturday as the Indian Air Force's famed Sarang Helicopter Display Team performed a dazzling airshow—one that went far beyond aerobatics. Staged as part of the 93rd Indian Air Force Day celebrations, the display doubled as a powerful message of women's empowerment, self-belief and Atmanirbharta for the thousands of young spectators, especially the girls who watched with wide-eyed wonder. "At the centre of the moment stood Flight Lieutenant Pallavi Sangwan, the team's commentator, whose words rippled through the crowd with as much force as the synchronized rotor blades overhead. Addressing the girls directly, she said: "Dare to dream, and dream boldly. Whatever you want to become, chase it with determination. Don't shy away from hard work. Every dream is achievable if you stand your ground and believe in yourself. Her message complemented the artistry unfolding in the sky. Each aerial movement—graceful yet powerful—carried symbolic meaning. Explaining the



formations that captivated the crowds, Pallavi said, "The 'India' formation represents Atmanirbharta. The 'Heart' formation is our gesture of giving back the love people shower on us. The 'Glass' is like a celebratory toast to the occasion, and the Sarang Split is our salute to the nation. When the helicopters finally descended, applause erupted from students, families and aviation enthusiasts who had gathered from across Cachar district. Squadron Leaders Nishank Avasthi and Gokul, joined by Pallavi, expressed heartfelt gratitude. "Performing here af-

ter Guwahati and receiving this warmth means so much," they said. "If even a handful of young minds felt inspired today. The Sarang team holds a distinctive place in global military aviation: it is the only helicopter display team in the world to perform with five helicopters in formation. Their aircraft—the indigenous HAL-built Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv—stood gleaming on the tarmac, representing India's progress toward technological self-reliance. "The rigid rotor system gives immediate response, ideal for aerobatic manoeuvres," explained Squadron Leader Gokul.

Squadron Leader Nishank added that beyond demonstrations, these same helicopters play crucial roles in humanitarian missions—from flood and landslide rescues across India to the high-profile Operation Rahat in Uttarakhand. "Asked how Silchar appeared from the cockpit, both pilots smiled. "In one word—beautiful. Pe. The event left a deep impression on the young audience. For Pragma and Suneri, Class XI students of Kendriya Vidyalaya, seeing the Sarang pilots up close felt like stepping into a dream. "It looked like the sky was dancing for us," said Pragma, clutching an autograph from Flight Lieutenant Pallavi, whom she called her inspiration. "Their courage and dedication thrill me. I want to be like Pallavi ma'am one day. The Sarang team thanked the Air Force Station at Kumbhirgram for seamless arrangements and an overwhelming reception. As the crowd slowly dispersed, many carried with them not just the memory of whirring blades and sweeping formations—but the lingering power of a message that urged every young girl watching to look up, dream big and believe that the sky is hers to claim.

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**NATIONAL PRESS DAY**

16 NOV, 2025

Saluting every journalist who chooses truth over comfort. Happy National Press Day!

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## NATIONAL PRESS DAY: WHY AN INDEPENDENT NEWSROOM STILL MATTERS

National Press Day isn't just a calendar event. It's a reminder of the one institution that keeps every other institution honest. The day marks the formation of the Press Council of India, but the spirit behind it runs deeper. It's about the right to question power, the courage to report without fear, and the quiet discipline that goes into verifying every fact before it reaches the public.

Here's what matters. A free press isn't a luxury. It's the backbone of any society that claims to be democratic. When reporters step out to cover a protest, a village dispute, a policy shift, or a corruption trail, they're doing more than telling a story. They're ensuring that no authority operates without scrutiny. They're giving ordinary citizens the information they need to decide, vote, object, and demand better.

The landscape has changed. Newsrooms run smaller. The noise on social media often drowns out verified reporting. Algorithms reward outrage, not accuracy. But the mission of real journalism hasn't shifted. It still relies on curiosity, skepticism, and the commitment to put facts ahead of comfort.

Let's break it down. National Press Day is a good moment to recognize the people who build that mission every day. Reporters in remote districts who cover floods, conflict, and displacement with almost no logistical support. Editors who fight for ethical standards even when it slows the rush to publish. Photographers who stand at the edge of chaos to document what others look away from. Fact-checkers who spend hours on a single claim so falsehoods don't become public truth.

There's another side to this day. It's also a reminder of the pressures weighing on the press. Legal intimidation. Online harassment. Shrinking revenues. Attempts to bend editorial lines. These challenges don't erase the role of the media, but they do make the work harder. An honest conversation about press freedom in India has to acknowledge these constraints rather than gloss over them.

What this really means is that supporting credible journalism isn't just the responsibility of the people inside newsrooms. It's also on the audience. Choosing verified information over forwarded messages, paying for journalism when possible, and disagreeing respectfully without trying to silence someone—all of this strengthens the environment in which the press operates.

National Press Day isn't about celebration alone. It's about recommitting to the idea that democracy survives only when truth has room to breathe. The press may adapt, reinvent, and argue with itself, but its purpose stays the same: tell the story as it is, even when it's inconvenient.

That's the real tribute to the day.



### QUOTE OF THE DAY

Man always believes more readily that which he prefers. He, therefore, rejects difficulties for want of patience in investigation. - Francis Bacon

# NDA'S LANDSLIDE VICTORY, AND THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF INDIAN POLITICS



KISHAN BHAWNANI

Unprecedented victory in Bihar—No record set in the past 15 years matches the grandeur and scale of public support of this election.

Following the NDA's unprecedented success, a new energy is being seen in the party's national politics, with slogans like "Bihar is just a glimpse, Bengal is still left" echoing. - Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhawnani, Gondia, Maharashtra

Gondia-Globally, Bihar, one of India's most politically active and sensitive states, has once again delivered a mandate that has not only created a huge stir in state politics but also profoundly impacted the balance of power and political signals at the national level. The 2025 election results have made it clear that the political fortress of Patna is once again in the hands of Nitish Kumar, Bihar's experienced and long-serving leader. The NDA alliance has not only achieved a historic victory in this election, but no record set in the last 15 years matches the grandeur and scale of public support. I, Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhawnani, Gondia, Maharashtra, believe that the NDA's landslide comeback in Bihar marks a new chapter in political history. Based on election data and political analysis, it is almost certain that the ruling NDA will once again form the government. Nitish Kumar, considered a symbol of stability in Bihar politics, appears to be moving rapidly towards recapturing the state's political fortress. In this election, not only did the JDU-BJP alliance strongly retain its traditional voters, but the NDA also performed exceptionally well in areas where the opposition had gained in previous years. A deeper review of the election results makes it clear that the NDA's victory this time is not the result of a simple electoral wave, but rather the combined effect of several multifaceted socio-political strategies, plans, and governance models. Bihar voters are no longer voting solely on the basis of political parties, but rather, they are choosing governments that demonstrate administrative capabilities, a track record of development, and a clear vision for the future.

Friends, if we talk about the record-breaking performance, the NDA is inching closer to exceeding 200 seats. The most notable aspect of this election was that the JDU-BJP alliance is nearing the 200-seat mark, exceeding any electoral performance in the last 15 years. This is not just an electoral victory; it is a social message that the people of Bihar have prioritized stability, experience, and a policy-driven model of governance. Two key factors behind the NDA's victory were the effective delivery of schemes at the grassroots level, and the weak organization and fragmentation of the opposition. Like other states in India,

elections in Bihar are now being fought not solely on caste lines, but on factors such as the delivery of schemes, women's safety, youth employment, and social welfare. This shift signals the maturing of Indian democracy.

Friends, if we consider the BJP's national expansion strategy from Bihar to Bengal, the unprecedented success of the NDA has revealed a new energy in the BJP's national politics. The party has clearly stated that "Bihar is just a glimpse, Bengal is still left." This statement is not merely a political slogan, but reflects a deeper strategic direction of Indian politics. Currently, the BJP is steadily moving into states that have previously been dominated by regional parties or left-socialist alliances. The BJP has long struggled in West Bengal, and the victory in Bihar has given the party confidence that its policies and political strategies are gaining new strength in eastern India as well. Bengal holds immense political and geostrategic importance; a change of power there could further alter the balance of Indian politics. Therefore, the success in Bihar appears to be the foundation for the BJP's Bengal campaign.

Friends, if we consider the historic turnout, a celebration of the maturation of Bihar's democracy, the most impressive feature of this election was the historic voter turnout in the state, which placed Bihar among the most politically active states in the country, where democratic participation is steadily increasing. Voter turnout was recorded at 68.79 percent in the second phase and 65.08 percent in the first phase. The combined turnout for the two phases is 66.90 percent, a 9.6 percent increase over the previous election. This is not just a percentage, but a sign of a changing democratic mindset. In India, it is generally believed that high voter turnout often reflects an anti-incumbency wave, but Bihar upended this notion. Here, high voter turnout favored the ruling coalition—a testament to the fact that voters were satisfied with the government's performance and wanted to give it a second chance.

Friends, if we consider the decisive contribution of women in understanding the trust placed on the Nitish Kumar model, if there is any force at the heart of this NDA victory, it is the women of Bihar. By voting a record 71.78 percent, women not only influenced the electoral mathematics but also sent a clear message that they are with the government that directly impacts their lives. Nitish Kumar's government has consistently implemented schemes focusing on women's safety, economic independence, and social participation. Three schemes in particular rallied the women's vote bank behind the NDA: (1) Direct Financial Assistance Scheme of ₹10,000 - Financial independence is the most important tool for women. This state scheme provided direct

financial support to millions of women, with impacts felt from the family level to the societal level. (2) Lakhpati Didi Scheme. This model connects women with self-employment, self-reliance, and entrepreneurship. Women, traditionally confined to the home, are now at the center of earning. (3) The Jeevika Model - Bihar's Jeevika program is being considered a successful experiment in women's empowerment across the country. It empowers women economically and socially through self-help groups. In this election, women played a decisive role, supporting the NDA, which completely changed the electoral dynamics. This is the first time in Indian political history that women have proven to be the strongest political backbone of an electoral alliance.

Friends, if we consider whether the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process influenced the election results, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) program implemented in Bihar played a major role in updating and ensuring the accuracy of the voter list. Under this process, millions of new voters were added to the list, and deceased or relocated voters were removed. The biggest impact of the SIR was that young first-time voters and migrant rural women joined the rolls in large numbers, a significant portion of whom supported the NDA. While some analysts claim that the SIR process could have benefited the opposition All India Alliance, ground realities prove that the newly added segments were more influenced by the NDA's welfare programs. Therefore, the SIR not only streamlined the voter list but also indirectly influenced voting patterns.

Friends, if we consider the mandate of Bihar, a signal for India's political future, the outcome of this election not only decides the politics of one state but also determines the future direction of Indian politics. This mandate in Bihar sends four key signals: (1) Welfare politics remains dominant; the public elects a government that delivers schemes to the grassroots. (2) Women have become the new decisive force in Indian politics; female voters will be the most influential factor in all future elections. (3) The BJP continues to expand in eastern India; after Bihar, Bengal will become the base of the next political struggle. (4) Democracy is maturing; the highest voter turnout in history demonstrates that people are actively participating in democracy.

So, if we examine and analyze the entire above narrative, we will find that Bihar has become a mirror of India's changing democratic landscape. Bihar has once again proven itself to be the pole star of Indian politics. The political environment here determines the direction not only of state politics but also of national politics. Nitish Kumar's potential return, the NDA's resounding success, the historic turnout

of women, the growing democratic enthusiasm, and the impact of the SIR process all combine to give this election a special place in India's political history. This election not only chose a government, it also charted India's democratic and political future. This mandate from Bihar is a decisive message for Indian politics: development, stability, women's empowerment, and good governance will be the real politics of the coming decade.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**A new generation of Man-portable Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (MP-AUVs) have been indigenously designed and developed by the NSTL in collaboration with other labs NPOL, RCI, HEMRL, and DYSL-AT for mine countermeasure missions. The system comprises multiple AUVs equipped with Side Scan Sonar and under water Cameras as primary payloads for real-time detection & classification of Mine-Like Objects. The onboard deep learning based target recognition algorithms enable autonomous classification of MLOs which significantly reduces the mission time. A robust underwater acoustic communication mechanism has been integrated to facilitate inter-AUV data exchange during mission execution ensuring enhanced situational awareness. The recently concluded field trials have successfully validated salient system parameters and critical mission objectives. ~ DRDO**



## Zohran Mamdani's multitudes and India's soft power

NIRUPAMA RAO

"I contain multitudes," wrote Walt Whitman, and in Zohran Mamdani's story, those multitudes seem to acquire living form.

The newly elected mayor of New York City—born of an Indian mother and an Ugandan father, raised in Queens, educated in Bowdoin, and now an American political figure who speaks fluent Hindi and quotes Jawaharlal Nehru—is a walking conversation between India and America. In him converge the legacies of Mira Nair, who brought the fragrance of Indian life to global cinema, and Mahmood Mamdani, whose scholarship has mapped the intersections of power and identity across continents. Together they shaped a son whose worldview is an amalgam of the religious, cultural, and ideological that shapes a migrant identity.

In a time when politics everywhere seems to crystallise difference, Mamdani embodies the opposite impulse: fluidity. He is of Hindu and Muslim descent, Indian and African, American by citizenship but global by imagination—he stands as a reminder that identity is layered and has multiple convergences. When he eats biryani with his hands, plays Bollywood music at his victory lap, or quotes Nehru to a New York audience, he does not do it to parade 'Indianness'. He does it naturally, unapologetically. That, precisely, is soft power at work—the persuasion of authenticity, not of propaganda.

Soft power, as Joseph Nye first framed it, is

the ability of a nation to attract and influence through culture, values, and example, rather than coercion. For India, it has long meant yoga and cuisine, Bollywood and cricket, Gandhi and Tagore. But soft power is also a living thing; it renews itself through people, it perches in the soul. Each generation finds new symbols, new emissaries who, knowingly or not, extend the reach of India's cultural imagination.

Zohran Mamdani may not represent India in any formal sense, yet he reflects some of its finest possibilities—pluralism, intellectual curiosity, and the capacity to juggle contradictions.

Some have responded to this notion with scepticism or even irritation. There are those who say that India's fascination with Mamdani's victory is "out of proportion", that he identifies as Ugandan rather than Indian, that he has criticised the present government and therefore should not be claimed as part of our civilisational fabric. Others go further, and use the uglier rhetoric of communal suspicion.

But this misses the point. Celebrating Mamdani's story is not about claiming him. It is about recognising the Indian imagination at work in the wider world—the idea that many truths can coexist, that one can be rooted without being lost. His lineage and sensibility mirror the subcontinent's own civilisational trait: synthesis. We are not a monolith, but a mosaic. From language and cuisine to music and faith, India has always been a sangam of influences—that have

come from abroad and which we have assimilated. Mamdani, born of that inheritance and shaped by the pluralism of New York, simply continues the pattern in another register.

It is true, as some critics remind us, that soft power cannot exist in a vacuum. The US projected its culture only after it had secured its military and economic dominance. China, too, is investing in the infrastructure of global power before turning to the subtler work of cultural influence. India's soft power must therefore be backed by credibility, coherence, and the ability to deliver prosperity and equity at home. Sentiment alone cannot substitute for transformation.

Yet, sentiment has its own force. It is what keeps a civilisation humane. When we speak of soft power, we are also speaking of empathy, of the ability to see oneself in the other. In celebrating figures like Mamdani, we are not imagining a geopolitical triumph; we are asserting a moral one—the endurance of pluralism as a value worth carrying into every corner of the world.

For India, whose diaspora now spans every continent, this moral soft power is both a gift and a responsibility. Each time an Indian-origin figure rises abroad—whether a scientist, a writer, a tech entrepreneur, or a mayor—it reflects how far the idea of India travels. Not the passport, but the idea; the belief that diversity is strength, that contradictions can coexist, that democracy, however flawed, remains a necessary experiment. Mamdani's ascent may not impact our future,

but it speaks to the world about what the Indian ethos, at its best, can inspire.

To dismiss this as romantic is to misunderstand the nature of influence. Romantic imagination catalyses political change. Tagore's dream of "a world where knowledge is free" became the foundation of India's global identity. Whitman's verse about multitudes was poetry before it was political philosophy; it helped define the American creed. Without the romance of inclusion, democracies ossify into tribes.

It is fair, too, to note the shadows. The backlash against diversity in the West is real. Hate crimes against South Asians and Muslims have risen in many societies. Every advance in representation is met with an equal and opposite reaction. Mamdani himself will no doubt face that pressure—and perhaps, as one cynical commentator suggested, will have to navigate it carefully to survive politically. But the existence of prejudice is not an argument against pluralism; it is the reason pluralism must be defended.

When Mira Nair made *Monsoon Wedding*, she told a story of generational conflict and redemptive tenderness—a family bound together by love despite its flaws. Two decades later, her son's political journey feels like a sequel in another medium. Where she used film to project India's warmth and complexity to the world, her son manifests a similar, engaging attractiveness embodying a cultural confidence that does not need permission to belong.

## Assam CM warns zero tolerance as police arrest 21 for supporting Delhi terror attack online

GUWAHATI

Assam Police arrest 21 for online support of Delhi attackers. Operation spans urban and rural areas, showing widespread monitoring. Chief Minister warns against online sympathy for terrorism.

The Assam government has initiated a sweeping crackdown on individuals allegedly posting online content in support of the attackers. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma issued a stern warning that the state would not tolerate any expression of sympathy for terrorist activities on social media.

Acting on reports of objectionable posts circulating across various platforms, the Assam Police launched a targeted, multi-district operation. So far, 21 individuals have been arrested from across the state for allegedly expressing support for the perpetrators of the Delhi attack.

The arrests span a wide geographical range, covering districts such as Darrang, Goalpara, Nalbari, Chirang, Kamrup, Bongaigaon, Hailakandi,



Lakhimpur, Barpeta, Hojai, South Salmara, Kokrajhar, Bajali and Dhubri. List of Individuals Arrested: Matiur Rahman (Darrang), Hasan Ali Mondal (Goalpara), Jayanta Mohan Das (Nalbari), Abdul Latif (Chirang)

Wajuhul Kamal (Kamrup), Nur Amin Ahmed (Bongaigaon), Rafizul Ali (Bongaigaon), Farid Uddin Laskar (Hailakandi), Inamul Islam (Lakhimpur), Firuz Ahmed alias Papon (Lakhimpur)

Shahil Shoman Sikdar alias Shahidul Islam (Barpeta), Rakibul Sultan (Barpeta), Nasim Akram (Hojai), Taslim Ahmed (Kamrup), Abdur Rahim Mollah alias Bappi Hussain (South Salmara), Karinur Hasan (Chirang), Abu Hanif alias New Collection (Bongaigaon), Monwar Hussain (Kamrup), Inamul Haque (Kokrajhar), Nabi Hussain (Bajali), Azizur Hussain (Dhubri), Chief Minister Sarma, in a Facebook post, asserted that the crackdown would continue and further arrests could be expected.

"We will not tolerate anyone expressing support online for the terrorists behind the Delhi attack. Strict action will be taken against those who do so," he said.

The Assam Police have intensified monitoring of digital platforms as part of the state's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and any form of online radicalisation.

## Tripura police, BSF arrest man in joint border raid, seize pistol and suspected Bangladeshi drugs



AGARTALA

A joint security operation in Tripura uncovered a pistol, ammunition and a cache of suspected Bangladeshi-origin drugs during a raid at a house close to the Srimantapur border, police confirmed on November 15.

Tripura Police from Sonamura Police Station and Border Security Force personnel searched the Rabindra Nagar,

Bhogipur home of Babul Miah, known locally as Body Babul, after receiving what officials described as a credible tip-off.

The operation began at about 3:30 pm and was conducted in the presence of an Executive Magistrate and independent witnesses.

Officers reported recovering a factory-made pistol with a

magazine, four live rounds, a butcher's chopper, 10 grams of YABA tablets and 100 Diazepam BP 5 mg tablets. Investigators also seized 250 empty bottles of Eskuf syrup, which police say may indicate drug-syrup trafficking across the border.

Miah, 49, was arrested at the scene, while his wife, Khursheda Begum, 27, was detained for questioning. Police said a case is being filed at Sonamura Police Station under relevant legal provisions.

## Security forces clear 476 acres of illegal poppy fields in coordinated Manipur crackdown



IMPHAL

In one of the biggest coordinated anti-narcotics drives in recent months, security forces wiped out more than 476 acres of illegal poppy cultivation across Kangpokpi and Ukhrul districts between November 11 and 15.

The latest phase of the operation unfolded on November 15, when a joint team of Manipur Police, Assam Rifles and the Central Reserve Police Force cleared close to 20 acres of illicit poppy fields at Loibol Khullen village under New Keithelmanbi Police Station in Kangpokpi district.

The team seized two sacks of salt packets used in the cultivation process. Spray pumps, pipes, herbicides and other materials recovered from the site were destroyed and burnt.

Officials said the sustained crackdown is part of the state's wider effort to curb narcotics production and dismantle networks that operate in remote hill areas.



IMPHAL

The BJP's Manipur unit has declared that the recent Bihar Assembly election results demonstrate the failure of the Congress party's 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' campaign to gain traction with voters.

Speaking to reporters at the party office on November 15, BJP state vice-president Ch Chidamanda Singh said the campaign, which was launched under Rahul Gandhi's leadership, had "backfired" on the opposition party.

## 'Vote Chor' slogan backfired on Congress, failed to sway voters in Bihar: Manipur BJP

Singh claimed the initiative, which the Congress had attempted to position as a nationwide movement, failed to achieve its intended impact. "The so-called 'hydrogen bomb' strategy detonated only within Congress offices, causing distress within the party," he said.

The BJP leader took aim at Congress members over the Bihar results, suggesting the outcome would increase stress levels within the opposition ranks. "Several of them who used to need 2 mg of BP medicine will now require 5 mg after witnessing the Bihar results," Singh remarked.

The 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' campaign was designed to challenge allegations of electoral malpractice, but the Bihar mandate appears to have undermined its effectiveness as a political tool, according to the BJP's assessment.

GUWAHATI

Assam Education Minister Ranaj Pegu on November 15 said that a tripartite meeting will be held in December to discuss the long-standing demand for bringing the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC) under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Pegu said the meeting will involve representatives from the Centre, the Assam government and stakeholders of the Rabha Hasong region. The discussions are expected to focus on constitutional safeguards, administrative autonomy and developmental rights that the Sixth Schedule would confer upon the council.

Earlier in the day, marking the observance of Janajatiya Gaurav Divas, a newly constructed tribal boys' hostel at Boko Jawa-

## Tripartite talks on Sixth Schedule status for Rabha Hasong Council set for December: Assam minister



harlal Nehru College was inaugurated on Saturday by Assam's Minister for Education and Welfare of Plain Tribes & Backward Classes, Dr. Ranaj Pegu.

During the programme, Dr. Pegu also laid the foundation stone for a new girls' hostel with-

in the college campus. Both hostels—sanctioned at a cost of Rs 1 crore each—will accommodate 30 students, significantly easing residential challenges for tribal learners.

The Minister further announced that an additional hostel

would soon be approved to meet the growing requirements of the institution.

Principal Dr. Tapan Dutta highlighted that the tribal boys' hostel has been constructed under Article 275(1) of the Constitution, which provides financial assistance for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes.

In his address, Dr. Pegu underscored the need for introducing skill-based courses in higher education to improve employability and future readiness among students.

The event, held on the occasion of Janajatiya Gaurav Divas, witnessed the presence of students, faculty and invited dignitaries, marking a meaningful step toward expanding educational infrastructure and opportunities for tribal communities in the region.

## Mapal Kangjeibung set for return of Manipur Polo International after two-year break

IMPHAL

A two-year pause comes to an end this month as the Manipur Horse Riding & Polo Association (MHRPA) prepares to bring back the Manipur Polo International, a tournament long regarded as a key stage for both the sport's heritage and the future of the Manipuri pony.

The 15th edition is scheduled for November 22-29 at Mapal Kangjeibung, the world's oldest polo ground, according to Steering Committee chairman Prof Ch Priyaranjan. Colombia and the United States have confirmed participation, while Spain and Italy may join pending final clearances. Teams from the India Polo Association (India A), Chhattisgarh and Manipur (India B) complete the expected lineup.

Launched in 1991, the tournament



has grown into a major annual sporting event, consistently drawing full stands and strong local support. For many visiting players, participation doubles as a return to polo's roots, with Manipur's traditional

Sagol Kangjei recognised as the precursor to the modern game. Prof Ch Chittaranjan noted that the event has significantly boosted polo's popularity among local youth, with more than 200 active players

now in the state. The tournament has also helped spotlight the precarious condition of the Manipuri pony, turning the event into a rallying point for conservation efforts.

The MHRPA said the competition continues to open opportunities for local athletes, with several now employed by departments including Veterinary, Manipur Police and Assam Rifles. The association urged public support not only for the tournament but also for its broader mission, which aligns with government initiatives such as the 2016 Polo Policy.

The press conference was also attended by N Bedajeet Singh, chairman of the Technical Committee; N Tombi Raj, chairman of the Media Committee; and Col L Manogeba (Retd), president of the Manipur Equestrian Association.

## Mamoni Raisom Goswami's 83rd birth anniversary observed



GUWAHATI

The 83rd birth anniversary of noted Ramayani scholar, celebrated writer and Jnanpith awardee Dr Indira (Mamoni Raisom) Goswami was observed at Kumar Bhaskar Natya Mandir in Uzan Bazar on Friday. The event was organised by the South East Asia Ramayani Research Centre, which was established by Dr Goswami during her lifetime.

Retired Lieutenant General Rana Pratap Kalita attended as the chief guest, and former Tezpur University professor Dr Pradip Jyoti Mahanta was present as the guest of honour. Several distinguished personalities were also in attendance. Addressing the gathering, Lt Gen Kalita said that whenever inequality emerges in society, whenever women struggle for their rights, and whenever intolerance threatens freedom of expression, the writings of Mamoni Raisom Goswami remind people of empathy.

He said, "Mamoni Baideo showed everyone that literature is not only about the beauty of language but also the beauty of truth." Kalita said that "had Mamoni Baideo been alive, she would have spoken against the injustices witnessed today." He said she would have reminded society that empathy is essential for civilisation to progress and equality is vital for

peace. He added that her pen often became a weapon as she wrote fearlessly for society and urged all to carry forward her legacy.

Guest of honour Dr Mahanta said Mamoni Raisom Goswami dedicated her entire life to the pursuit of creation, which for her was a form of worship. Reflecting on her timeless novels and deep understanding of Ramayani literature, he said the message of peace and liberation within the Ramayani tradition may have inspired her, and she later explored that inspiration through her works. He said her novels portrayed people and society and celebrated life and humanity through pain and the dream of freedom. He noted that the theme of women's liberation also appears in her works, even though she never identified herself as a feminist writer. Dr Mahanta suggested that the South East Asia Ramayani Research Centre organise a two or three day discussion on her life and contributions.

The programme began with a mangalcharan by artist Barnali Das, followed by lighting of the lamp before her portrait. A minute of silence was observed in memory of singer Zubeen Garg. Centre director Sabita Sharma delivered the welcome address and recalled key moments from the writer's life. Members of her family presented a group song, followed by a dance performance by artist Namrata Goswami. Actor Zerifa Wahid recited two poems written by Dr Goswami. Sukanaya Kashyap Mahanta anchored the event, and Centre president Jyotirmoy Goswami offered the vote of thanks.

## Tri-Service drill concludes in Mechuka, with unified combat display

GUWAHATI

Exercise Poorvi Prachand Prahar, which showcased the seamless integration of the Indian Army with the Air Force, Navy and ITBP in conducting high-altitude, all-terrain operations in the Eastern Theatre, concluded on Saturday.

The exercise validated joint preparedness, coordinated manoeuvres and the ability of the armed forces to operate as a unified combat team in complex and dynamic operational environment, a Defence spokesman said.

Elite units including Special Forces, MARCOS, Garud, Bhairav Battalion and Arunachal Scouts played a pivotal role as force multipliers, extending the reach, precision and impact of ground operations. Cutting-edge technologies such as night-enabled, all-weather FPVs, swarm drones and advanced unmanned aerial systems operating across the electromagnetic spectrum delivered real-time surveillance, precision targeting and synchronised



fires. These capabilities were integrated with manoeuvre elements, attack helicopters and the composite DIVY-ASTRA battery to enhance battlefield effects, he added.

Residents near Jorhat IAF base said they saw fighters and other aircraft taking off and landing at the base as early as 6 am and as late as 11 pm. Conducted under the aegis of Headquarters Eastern Command and set

against the backdrop of snow-covered mountains and challenging terrain, the exercise focused on precise coordination and multi-domain integration across diverse operational settings. Air, land and logistic elements operated in close harmony, ensuring optimal force deployment and effective mission execution under realistic conditions.

"A key highlight of the exercise was

its emphasis on a 'Whole-of-Nation Approach', blending military proficiency with civil-military collaboration. The active participation of various national security agencies alongside the armed forces underscores a collective commitment to frontier security and coordinated response mechanisms," the spokesman said.

The exercise had commenced on November 10 with deployment of advanced surveillance resources including helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) along with space resources and Special Forces to create seamless domain awareness and detect simulated targets.

Once identified, these targets were swiftly destroyed through the synchronised joint firepower of long-range rocket systems, medium artillery, armed helicopters, swarm drones, loitering munitions and kamikaze drones in an electronically contested environment. Lieutenant General Abhijit S Pendharkar, General Officer Commanding 3 Corps, reviewed the exercise on November 13. This exercise is a continuation of 'Ex Poorvi Prahar' held in November 2024 and 'Ex Prachand Prahar' held in March 25 this year, which had focused on the integrated application of aviation assets.

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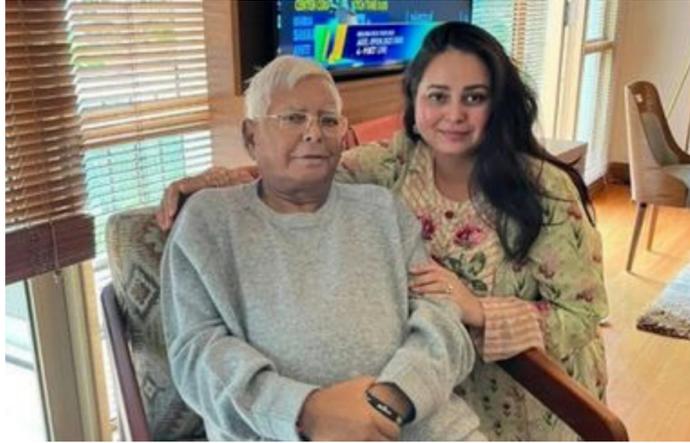
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## ‘Quitting politics, disowning family’: Lalu Prasad’s daughter Rohini in cryptic X post day after Bihar poll results



PATNA

A day after Lalu Prasad Yadav’s RJD suffered the second-worst drubbing in its history in the Bihar assembly polls, his daughter Rohini Acharya on Saturday announced that she was “quitting politics” and severing ties with the family. In a post on X, Acharya said, “I am quitting politics and I am disowning my family... This is what Sanjay Yadav and Rameez had asked me to do...and I am taking all the blame.”

Sanjay Yadav is the Rajya Sabha MP from RJD and one of the most trusted aides of Lalu Prasad’s son Tejashwi Yadav, under whose leadership the party fought the Bihar elections.

Rameez is said to be Tejashwi’s old friend who hails from a political family in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, reported . Acharya, who was in news for donating a kidney to her father a few years ago, was active in campaigning for Tejashwi in the Bihar polls. However, speculations are rife that she was “unhappy” over the expulsion of Tej Pratap Yadav, elder son of Lalu Prasad, from the party. A doctor by qualification, Acharya chose to become a homemaker and lives with her Singapore-based husband.

In the second-worst performance in its history, the RJD was reduced to just 25 seats when the results of the Bihar Assembly polls were

announced on Friday, making way for a historic win by the ruling NDA coalition led by JD(U)’s Nitish Kumar.

The NDA registered a spectacular victory, sweeping 202 of the 243 seats, with the BJP emerging as the largest party with 89 seats, followed by the JDU with 85. In its first reaction to the defeat, RJD said “ups and downs are inevitable” in public service. “Public service is an unceasing process, an endless journey! Ups and downs are inevitable in it. No sorrow in defeat, no arrogance in victory! The Rashtriya Janata Dal is the party of the poor, it will continue to raise their voice among the poor!”, the party said in a post on X.

## BJP says Bihar results to impact Bengal polls, TMC debunks claim

KOLKATA/LUCKNOW

After the NDA’s grand victory in the Bihar Assembly elections, the BJP hopes that the results will set the tone for West Bengal polls next year and Uttar Pradesh elections in 2027. The ruling Trinamool Congress in Bengal and the Opposition Samajwadi Party in UP rule out any such impact.

BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Suvendu Adhikari said, “Bihar’s victory is ours; now it is Bengal’s turn. Just as the Bihar election was conducted after the SIR, the poll in Bengal will also be conducted with a pure and clean electoral roll.”

UP Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya, who was the co-convenor for Bihar elections, said: “Magadh jeeta, Awadh bhi jeetenge. 2027 mein 2017 dohrayenge (After winning Magadh (Bihar), we will win Awadh (UP). Will repeat 2017 in 2027).” He was referring to the BJP winning 325 of 403 seats in UP in 2017.

Rubbishing the BJP’s claim, TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee said, “Mamata Banerjee routed the CPM in Bengal ending the 34-year Left rule in the state. Only she can fight against BJP and we will form the next government with absolute majority.”

According to TMC insiders, SIR would backfire on the BJP and a vast section of Hindus would vote for the party. The TMC leadership is also confident of retaining its traditional minority vote base.

“The NDA won in Bihar mainly because of welfare schemes, particularly pro-women programmes. Everyone knows that Mamata Banerjee’s pioneering role in implementing most of the social security measures, starting from Lakshmir Bhandar, Swasthya Sathi, Sabuj Sathi, Kanyashree and many others.



She will get overwhelming support through the measures despite the SIR phobia unleashed by BJP,” a senior TMC leader said.

Political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty said, “The Trinamool had won in the 2021 Assembly polls with absolute majority within six months after Nitish Kumar’s JD(U) and BJP formed the government in Bihar. Her government’s populist and social security schemes have kept her vote bank intact during her tenure since 2011.”

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said,

“SIR will not help BJP or NDA in Bengal, Tamil Nadu and UP since the political conspiracy was exposed.”

The NDA in UP, comprising BJP, Anupriya Patel-led Apna Dal, Suheldev Bahartiya Samaj Party, NISAHD and Jayant Chaudhary-led RLD, would work out the same strategy in the 2027 Assembly polls to bolster its fortunes by cementing its clout among non-Yadav OBCs and MBCs or EBCs.

Political analysts believe that the Bihar outcome would give an edge to the NDA, which was concerned

after a disappointing show in the Lok Sabha polls 2024 in UP as its tally had dwindled from 64 in 2019 to 36. At the same time, the performance of the Congress in Bihar could force Akhilesh to review his party’s tie-up with the grand old party, analysts say.

There could be certain takeaways from Bihar for UP. The popularity of PM Narendra Modi and the strategy of Home Minister Amit Shah have kept BJP on a firm footing. “They have done it earlier in UP and can repeat it in 2027,” said a political commentator.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Thousands protest crime and corruption in Mexico City as ‘Gen Z’ protests gain momentum



MEXICO CITY

Several thousand people took to the streets of Mexico City on Saturday to protest crime, corruption and impunity in a demonstration organized by members of Generation Z, but which ended with strong backing from older supporters of opposition parties.

The demonstration was mostly peaceful but ended with some young people clashing with the police. Protesters attacked police with stones, fireworks,

sticks and chains, grabbing police shields and other equipment.

The capital’s security secretary, Pablo Vázquez, said 120 people were injured, 100 of them police officers. Twenty people were arrested.

In several countries this year, members of the demographic group born between the late 1990s and early 2010s have organized protests against inequality, democratic backsliding and corruption.

The largest “Gen Z” protests took

place in Nepal in September, following a ban on social media, and led to the resignation of that nation’s prime minister. In Mexico, many young people say they are frustrated with systemic problems like corruption and impunity for violent crimes.

“We need more security” said Andres Massa, a 29-year-old business consultant who carried the pirate skull flag that has become a global symbol of Gen Z protests.

Arizbeth Garcia, a 43-year-old phy-

sician who joined the protests said she was marching for more funding for the public health system, and for better security because doctors “are also exposed to the insecurity gripping the country, where you can be murdered and nothing happens.” Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum still has high approval ratings despite a recent spate of high profile murders that includes the assassination of a popular mayor in the western state of Michoacan.

In the days leading up to Saturday’s protest, Sheinbaum accused right-wing parties of trying to infiltrate the Gen Z movement, and of using bots on social media to try to increase attendance.

This week some “Gen Z” social media influencers said they no longer backed Saturday’s protests. While elderly figures like former President Vicente Fox, and Mexican billionaire Ricardo Salinas Pliego published messages in support of the protests.

Saturday’s march was attended by people from several age groups, with supporters of the recently killed Michoacan Mayor Carlos Manzo, attending the protest wearing the straw hats that symbolize his political movement.

“The state is dying,” said Rosa Maria Avila, a 65-year-old real estate agent who traveled from the town of Patzcuaro in Michoacan state.

“He was killed because he was a man who was sending officers into the mountains to fight delinquents. He had the guts to confront them,” she said of Manzo.

## Pakistan at sight, India flags ‘conflicts of interest’ in UNSC anti-terror panels



NEW DELHI

India has flagged United Nations Security Council member with “vested interests” chairing subsidiary bodies, in an oblique reference to Pakistan co-chairing the counter-terrorism panel, citing conflicts of interest, in an oblique reference to Pakistan.

At a Council debate on working methods, India’s Permanent Representative to the UN, P Harish called for greater transparency and objectivity in the selection of chairs for UNSC subsidiary bodies and “pen-holderships”.

“Selection of Chairs of subsidiary bodies and pen-holderships needs to be carried out in a more transparent, objective and time bound manner.

“Chairs and pen-holderships are privileges that come with major responsibilities. Discussions in the Council on distribution of Chairs and pen-holderships must prevent

Council members with vested interests from being accorded these privileges. Obvious and outright conflicts of interest can have no place in the Council,” he said.

Harish hit out at what he described as a shroud of secrecy over how the Council rejects proposals to designate terrorists.

“There must be greater transparency in the functioning of the subsidiary organs. A case in point is the manner in which listing requests are rejected. Unlike de-listing decisions, these are done in a rather obscure manner, with member states that are not on the Council not being privy to details,” Harish pointed out.

Without naming the country involved, Harish’s remarks were clearly aimed at the member currently chairing the 1988 Taliban sanctions committee, which oversees travel bans on Taliban officials.

Pakistan member also co-chairs the counter-terrorism committee while maintaining its own complex equations with groups under UN sanctions. India has long maintained that terrorism is an instrument of Pakistan’s state policy.

The envoy also questioned the continued existence of certain UN mandates that India believes have outlived their relevance, a thinly veiled reference to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

“Continuation of mandates that have outlived their utility for narrow political interests must not be allowed,” he said, warning that such missions drain resources in a constrained budget environment. He urged the Council to introduce sunset clauses for outdated peacekeeping operations.

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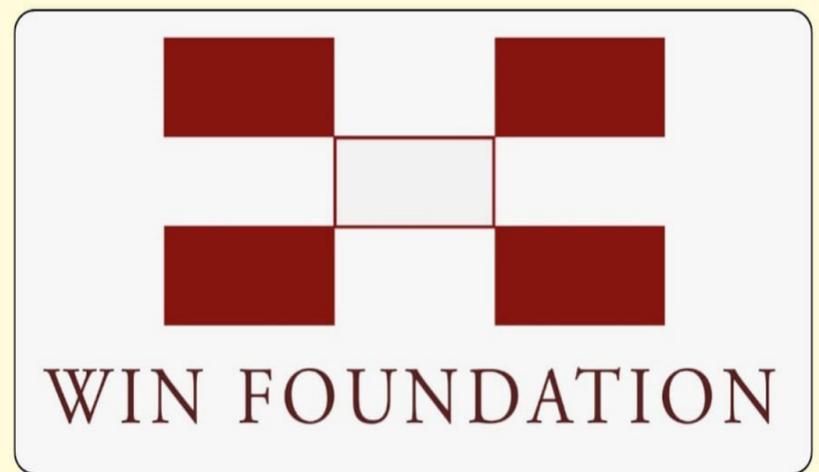


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